

# Whistle Stop



**Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society &  
Museum**

**P. O. Box 432, Johnson City, TN. 37605-0432**

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**[www.wataugavalleyrrhsm.org](http://www.wataugavalleyrrhsm.org)**



**Preserving Our Region's Railroad Heritage**

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Volume 42 No. 11

November 2022

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Ex-C&O 2-6-6-2 #1309 is captured steaming out of WESTERN MARYLAND SCENIC RAILROAD shops in Ridgeley, WV on its way across the Potomac River to the station in Cumberland, MD. The train was recently isolated in WV due to track damage caused by heavy rain, but the damage has been repaired and this magnificent machine rolls again.

[Facebook posting]

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## *October 24<sup>th</sup> General Membership Meeting*

Our next General Membership meeting will be held on Monday, October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 6:30 pm at the Chuckey Depot / Railroad Museum, 110 South Second St., Jonesborough, TN (at the railroad crossing). Our program this month will be offered by WVRHS&M Historian Gary Price talking about his experiences at Norfolk Southern in the MOW field. Bring a friend out and enjoy an evening of railroading with Gary relating all of his travels and experiences on Norfolk Southern.

*Member Notes*

To request that one of our members or family be reported for various concerns in the *Whistle Stop*, email a request to [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com).

**2023 OFFICER AND BOARD NOMINATIONS**

A slate of nominees has been presented to the Board on Tuesday, 11 October, and ratified. At this time the elections for officers are uncontested while there are 4 nominees for the 3 open d Director seats. Additional nominations will be accepted during the general meeting of Monday, 25 October. At that point nominations will be closed and elections will follow, concluding at the general meeting of December.

**OFFICERS**

President -----	Mike Tilley	Incumbent
Vice President -----	Howard Orfield	Incumbent
Secretary-----	Connie Hunt	
Treasurer-----	Jeanie Walker	Incumbent
Historian-----	Gary Price	Incumbent

Bios for those **BOARD OF DIRECTORS** nominees submitting such can be found on page 5.

**WATAUGA VALLEY CHRISTMAS EVENT 41<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY EVENT**

The Watauga Valley General Membership voted at the September General Membership meeting to hold our annual Christmas Event/41<sup>th</sup> anniversary Dinner on December 10 at 11:30 am at the Food City Banquet Room, 920 N. State of Franklin Rd, Johnson City, TN. The program will be a photo show of our events over the past 40 years. Details of the event will be sent out soon.

**2023 WVRHS&M DUES**

Membership Dues Statement for 2023 will be emailed or sent by USPS in November.

- Individual Membership:   \$ 20.00
- Family Membership:       \$ 5.00 per family member

- Benefits - 12 issues of the Watauga Valley RHS&M newsletter.
- Membership of the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum.
- Participation of all functions of the Watauga Valley RHS&M.

*2022 WVRHS&M Rail Events*

**HIWASSEE LOOP.** The Watauga Valley Railroad Museum operated our Hiwassee Gorge River Excursion on October 15, 2022. We had an excellent day to run the trip on a beautiful Saturday afternoon during the leaf change in Delano, TN. All of our passengers had a great time riding through the gorge.

## *Mechanical Department Report*

### *by Jim Magill*

#### GENERAL



Thanks to all the Mechanical and Cleaning Committees: Art Devoe, Don Findley, Jim Sutterlin, Cline Knowles, David Billings, Mike Tilley, David Denny, Jan Edwards, Gary Lombardi, Rick Chinouth, and Frank Gricus (hope we did not forget someone) for all the work they have done over the past year on our passenger cars.

If you would like to volunteer at the Spring Street Coach Yard on Tuesdays or Saturdays, please call 423-753-5797 or email [wataugavalley@embarqmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@embarqmail.com). There are projects for everyone; hope to hear from you.

#### ROLLING STOCK

“*Moultrie*” diner (WATX 400): In route to the North Carolina Transportation Museum.

“*St Augustine*” coach (WATX 500) and “*Powhatan Arrow*” coach (WATX 539): In service at the North Carolina Transportation Museum.

“*Crescent Harbor*” sleeper / lounge (WATX 2351) and “*Clinchfield 100*” office car (WATX 100): Ready for their next assignments.

## *Chuckey Depot / Museum*



Attendance at the Chuckey Depot/Museum has been very good with visitor numbers higher than expected. The train sale held on Saturday, October 1, saw 312 in attendance. A very successful sale with a lot of good stuff sold.

We are happy to announce that the Automatic Train Control System (ATCS) for Sand Valley and Telford is up and running. We had some issues with a weak signal at our Jonesborough tower but that has been corrected. Action can be viewed on the ATCS board at the Chuckey Depot Museum.

#### TRAINING SESSION IN THE PLANS FOR THE CHUCKEY DEPOT

Plans are to have another Chuckey Depot/Museum Host Training session later in the year. Sessions last about 1 hour. If you would like to host at the Chuckey Depot one day a month, please email Mike Tilley at [wataugavalley@gmail.com](mailto:wataugavalley@gmail.com) stating that you would like to get trained. When a date has been set for the training, we will call you to get everything confirmed. We had over 200 volunteer hours at the depot last month with record crowds.

# In the News ...

## *CSX Santa Train to Return to the Rails*



2019 Santa Train [Chris Anderson photo]

[CSX Press Release] The CSX *Santa Train*, a beloved Appalachian tradition for 80 years, will be back on the rails this year for the first time since 2019.

After two years of drive-through events necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the train will once again roll through Appalachia, making stops in Kentucky, Virginia and Tennessee to distribute more than 15 tons of toys and other items [photo below] to excited children and their parents. The 110-mile route begins at Shelby Yard near Pikeville, KY, and ends at Kingsport, TN.

The decision to run the traditional *Santa Train* on Saturday, Nov. 19, was made after an outpouring of support from communities along the route, as well as positive developments regarding staffing. Initially, CSX and its sponsorship partners Food City, Appalachian Power and Soles4Souls had planned another year of drive-through distribution events, but momentum for a return to the rails gathered steam quickly and led to the change in plans announced Sept. 27.



“The *Santa Train* is an important tradition, and running the train on its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary and beyond was always our hope,” said Bryan Tucker, vice president of Corporate Communications. “We can’t wait to see everyone along the route this year and for years to come. Our hope is to use the *Santa Train* tradition as a blueprint for community events and holiday trains in other parts of our network as well.”

## *NEW NORFOLK SOUTHERN TRAIN NUMBERS*

Additional list of new numbers of NORFOLK SOUTHERN trains through Johnson City.

- |                |                |                            |
|----------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| 13Z WEST BOUND | 127 WEST BOUND | 288 EAST BOUND             |
| 14Z EAST BOUND | 279 WEST BOUND | 289 WEST BOUND             |
| 126 EAST BOUND | 278 EAST BOUND | T24 EAST-/WEST-BOUND LOCAL |

Details about the 2022 *Santa Train* will be announced soon.

## *WVRHS&M Board Nominees*



### **Robert (Bob) A. Mushet**

I would be honored to be a member of the Board of Directors. I have been a member of the WVRHS for over 4 years. I am also a host for the depot.

I have joined the mechanical group at the coach yard where I have been responsible for the electronics in the coaches and for the various Broadcastify radios at the depot, yard caboose and the new Holston Mtn monitor system. I am an amateur radio operator K6JHX.

My wife Celeste and I moved to Washington Co. 13 years ago from NW Washington state. We have an 11-acre Alpaca hobby farm near Jonesborough.

I have worked in the aerospace industry since 1962 for Northrop, TRW, Hughes and finally Boeing where I retired after 32 years as a staff engineer. My whole career was testing and designing antenna systems for spacecraft.

My dad made sure I was a lifelong railfan and I subsequently chased “big steam” all over the West and Canada.

### **Rick Chinouth**

I have had a love for the railroad and trains since I was very young. Visits to my grandparents in Clinchco, VA (in the heart of the Clinchfield coal fields) gave me the opportunity to enjoy the movement to early diesel locomotives along the Clinchfield line. My 42-year career as a Pharmacist and a Specialist in the Pharmaceutical Industry gave me little time to pursue that love of trains, although I continued to railfan and appreciate the evolution of railroading as much as I could.

When I retired in 2017, I joined the Watauga Valley RHS&M and immediately trained for a hosting job at the Chuckey Depot Museum. I thoroughly enjoyed teaching the history of the Depot and introducing visitors to the area’s rich railroad past and present. I was soon appointed to the Depot’s Advisory Board and represented WVRHS&M on the Exhibit Subcommittee. I was eventually asked to chair the Exhibit Subcommittee, a position I hold today. I was elected a WVRHS&M Board member three years ago and have been honored to serve the club in that position.

Although I’m not the handiest person with tools, I have tried to help at our Spring Street Yard as much as I could. I spent untold hours with our incredible mechanical crew helping take apart Car 100 to prepare it for its final makeover. I help clean our cars for leasing, I bus host for many of our excursions and I am currently helping work to transform our Crescent Harbor sleeper/lounge into a (hopefully) money-making Airbnb rental for the club.

### **Les Billings**



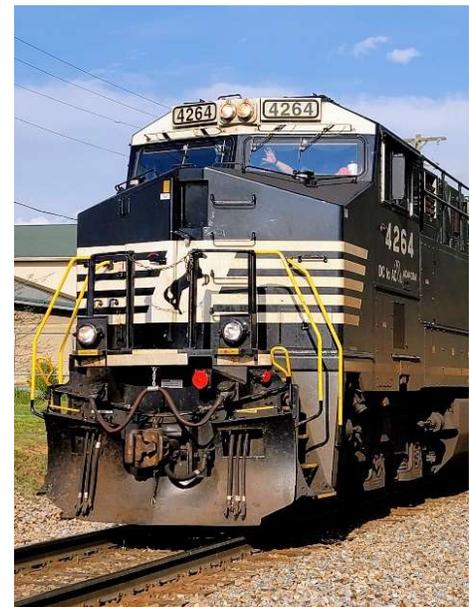
I am Les Billings, and I am running for a position on the WVHS board. I have lived in Johnson City all my life. I am married, my wife’s name is Kathy and I have 2 children. I work at Summers Industrial in Inside Sales and have been with Summers for almost 39 years. My love for railroads goes back to my childhood. I love to go railfanning and photograph as many trains as I can. My membership has been about 2 years. I have been a very active member since joining, attending all meetings, hosting the Museum monthly, working as many excursions as possible, and other activities of the chapter. I have had a section in the *Whistle Stop* newsletter, “Display in The Block” for over a year. Also, I have served as the Assistant Editor of the *Whistle Stop*, which was quite an honor. If elected to the Board I will work hard to continue the great success of the Chapter

*Display in the Block*  
*by Les Billings*

[Below] On a shopping visit to the Walmart in west Johnson City, I checked my ATCS and saw that NS 127 was getting close by. I told my wife to continue shopping and I would be back shortly after I photographed this westbound train. After waiting a few minutes, NS 127 rounded the bend, around MP 28 rumbling on toward Jonesborough with its lights gleaming on the track. Engine 1080, a single on the head end, with a UP and BNSF DPU's.



[Below] Here we see a very friendly Conductor waving as he passes my location around MP 29.4. (Johnson City) NS 201 with 4264 leading.



[Above] A 7pm outing led to this shot of 22A climbing out of Johnson City, MP 27.7. Part of Buffalo Mtn. can be seen in the background. He is Louisville bound.



[Above] On a cloudy/rainy Saturday afternoon in May, I was doing a little railfanning in Jonesborough and was able to catch NS 22A as it was passing the Chuckey Depot Museum. A very nice sight.



[Above] On an early Saturday morning I had got word that NS 22A had the Heritage Lehigh Valley 8104 Unit in the lead. So, I took off and headed to Telford and found it sitting on the siding waiting on east bound. This Heritage unit was the only one to be redesigned after its release in 2012.

[Below] For the CSX fans, a little action at the N.E Erwin Signal, B651 Ethanol train. It was led by a Kansas City Southern 4676 with CSX 536 second. The big surprise was the pusher on the end, a Canadian Pacific 8135.



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Published Monthly by the Watauga Valley Railroad Historical Society & Museum  
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**TIME-SENSITIVE MATERIAL**